2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

28 May 2010

Original: English

New York, 3-28 May 2010

Steps to promote the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and the realization of the goals and objectives of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East

Report submitted by Norway

1. Norway is firmly committed to the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which calls upon all States parties to extend their cooperation and to exert their utmost efforts to ensure the early establishment by regional parties of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

2. Norway has supported the annual General Assembly resolution calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. Norway has also supported the annual resolution of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) entitled "Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East".

3. Norway has encouraged all countries in the region to accept IAEA comprehensive safeguards, with the Additional Protocol as the current verification standard. As stated by IAEA, it is only through the Additional Protocol that the Agency can verify that a country's nuclear programme is exclusively for peaceful purposes.

4. Supporting universality of the Treaty, Norway has called upon Israel to join the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State and to place all nuclear material under IAEA safeguards. Norway has encouraged all countries in the region to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

5. In order for a zone to be established, it is clear that all countries in the region would have to contribute to fostering confidence. This also applies to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Norway has on a number of occasions urged the Islamic Republic of Iran to comply with demands set by the United Nations, such as the suspension of sensitive nuclear activities and full cooperation with IAEA.

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6. During the current review cycle, Norway has supported a number of projects exploring the modalities of a zone and facilitating its negotiation, among which are:

- The conferences on a weapons of mass destruction-free zone in the Middle East held by the School of Oriental and African Studies in London
- A scoping study and consultative process on the core elements of a zone undertaken by the Institute for Security Studies and the Center for Non-Proliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies
- An international conference on nuclear energy and non-proliferation organized by the Arab Institute for Security Studies in Amman 2009
- Workshops on implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) organized by the Office for Disarmament Affairs

7. In a new project entitled "Developing arms control-related solutions for the Middle East in a cooperative setting", Norway is pleased to partner with the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt. Supported by a wide range of Middle East scholars, the Institute has undertaken to develop new concepts for arms control and regional security that will provide unique input to future arms control and disarmament processes in the region.

8. Norway encourages the concerned parties to engage on how to set up a weapons of mass destruction-free zone in the Middle East. Norway is hopeful that its efforts may contribute positively to the development of such a zone, as well as to the overall peace process.